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Attachment F – Moderators Guide for Teacher Focus Groups

Section I. Getting to know each other (10 minutes)

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm a researcher from the Michael Cohen Group. What are all of your names _____?

We are working with the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service to help them develop nutritional lessons and materials for kindergarten students. As part of this project, we are talking to teachers like you about nutrition and activities for children. We will also be showing you some draft materials including a poster, an emergent reader and a song, that will all be part of a six-lesson nutrition curriculum. We will be using your feedback, as well as feedback from students and parents, to complete these materials. Before we begin I want to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers here -- we just want to know what you think. Whatever your opinion may be it will be extremely helpful for us to hear it. Also, I did not make any of the things I'll be showing you, so you can be totally honest. OK?

Please know, when I write my report, I will not refer to anyone by name. All data will be identified only by an ID number, not by any name. Your name will never be used in any reports of our research findings except as otherwise required by law.

Let's start with some general questions (ASK GROUP):

- What is a typical day like in your classroom?
- What are your favorite activities to do in the classroom?

- What kind of activities have you done with music and movement?
 - o Are there certain times in the school day when you do movement activities?

Section III. Nutrition in the Classroom (30 minutes)

Now we're going to talk about children and health.

- What does it mean to you to be *healthy*?

- What does the word *nutrition* mean to you?
- What role does the school have in helping children learn about making healthy food choices?
 - o (Probe: Do you think parents expect children to learn about nutrition in school?)
 - o (Probe: Are there any challenges to providing nutrition education in the classroom?)
- Do you have any input into your classroom curriculum? If not, who does?
 - o (Probe: What do you look for when selecting lessons?)
 - o (Probe: What makes a good lesson?)
 - o (Probe: What makes a lesson easy to use?)
 - o How do you learn about new lessons or activities for you classroom?
 - Do you share lessons with other teachers? How?
- Have you used health/nutrition lessons in the past? Which ones?
 - o (Probe: What types of things worked?)
 - o (Probe: What types of things did not work?)
 - o Do you ever talk about the school meals or menus with your students? Tell me more about that?
 - o Have you ever taught information about the food groups, MyPyramid, or MyPlate in the past?
- What kind of activities do you currently do in your classrooms that are related to health and nutrition?
- Do you have any experience preparing or serving food in the classroom with your students?
 - o Please describe those activities.
 - o How did you decide which foods to prepare and how to prepare them?
 - o Have you prepared food as part of a curriculum? Tell me more about that.
 - o Did anybody help you with these food preparation activities? How did they help?
 - o Are there any school policies about serving or preparing food in your classroom that influence which foods can be offered in the classroom?
- Tell me about your celebrations and holiday activities in the classroom.
 - o Are there opportunities to make those healthier? Why, or why not?
- If you were going to create a nutrition curriculum, what would you include to make it convenient for teachers to use?

Section IV. Song (15 minutes)

Now, I'd like to show you a children's song that will be used as part of the curriculum. As we're listening, please note any reactions you have to the song overall as well as certain sections.

[PLAY THE SONG – See Attachment O: Song Lyrics and Song]

- What are your first impressions after hearing this song?
- Do you think that your students will enjoy this song? Why, or why not?
- Do you think that your children would be able to understand the messages in this song? Why, or why not?
 - o What were the main messages that you heard in the song?
 - o Do you think the children will be able to understand the lyrics?
- Is this something you would consider using in you classroom? Why, or why not?
 - o How would you imagine using this song?
 - o What kind of activities would you imagine doing with this song?
- Are there any things that you would change about the song?
- Have you ever used educational music or songs in your class?
 - o Tell me about your previous experience.
 - (Probe: What kind of music have you used?)
 - (Probe: What learning activities have you done with music?)
 - o Do you feel like using music in learning activities is an effective teaching method for kindergarten children? Tell me more about that.
 - (Probe: Are there certain subjects, or are there certain topics, that are best suited for educational songs? Tell me more about that.)
 - o What are some things that would keep you from using music activities in your classroom?

Section IV. Reader (15 minutes)

Now, I'd like to get your feedback on an emergent reader (*Attachment K: Emergent Reader*) for kindergarten students. It is designed to help children practice their reading while also introducing them to the food groups and reinforcing the nutrition curriculum. This is a draft, and we're currently talking to students about what characters should be in the story. *[SHOW FOOD FRIENDS CHARACTER PAGES – Attachment I]* The story will incorporate one of these character sets when it is completed, depending on student feedback. Please take a few minutes to read through the story.

[ALLOW TEACHERS TO READ THROUGH THE STORY]

- Tell me what you think about this story?
 - Do you think your students would be engaged in reading this story? Why, or why not?
 - (*Probe: Is it an emergent reader book they would read multiple times?*)
 - Is this emergent reader book at an appropriate reading level? Please explain.
 - To what extent is this story successful at communicating information about the food groups?
 - What do you think about the sequence of events in this story?
 - Is there anything you would add or change about this emergent reader book to make it better?
- Is this like other emergent reader books you've read with your children before?
 - Please describe those other stories.
 - (*Probe: If you've never read emergent readers with your class, is this like emergent readers you've seen before?*)
- What about the probe questions at the end of the story? What are your thoughts about the questions?
 - Do these questions successfully measure children's understanding of the story? Why, or why not?
 - Is there anything you would add or change to improve these discussion/comprehension questions?

I want to go back to the characters we looked at before (*SHOW CHARACTER PAGE – Attachment I*). One of these sets of characters will be chosen to include in the reader, posters and other curriculum materials. Their personalities will be largely the same. The only difference will be their visual representation.

- Which of these character sets would appeal to your students? Why?
- In your experience, do children respond more to characters that look like them (Set A), or more make believe characters (Set B)? Why?
- Which character set do you feel is a better fit with the emergent reader? Why?

- Which of these characters would do a better job communicating information about the five food groups? Why?

Section IV. Poster (20 minutes)

Now I'd like to get your feedback on a few draft classroom posters. One of these will accompany the nutrition curriculum and is intended to reinforce the lessons and activities about the five food groups. First, I have a few general questions about educational posters.

- Describe what successful classroom posters look like?
 - How do you use these posters in your classrooms?
 - Do you think children notice and/or learn from classroom posters? Why, or why not?

Now let's take a look at a few poster concepts (*Note: rotate order of posters in each location*).

[DISPLAY POSTER A – Attachment M]

- What are your first impressions looking at this poster?
 - (*Probe: What is the first thing that you notice?*)
 - How does this poster compare to other things that are displayed in your classroom?
- Do you think students would be able to use this poster independently? Why, or why not?
 - To what extent would this poster capture your student's attention?
- Would something like this help you teach about the food groups? Why, or why not?
 - Is there any information that gets lost or is unclear on this poster?
- Is this something you would consider using in your classroom? Why, or why not?
 - How would you imagine using this poster?

[DISPLAY POSTER B – Attachment M]

- What are your first impressions looking at this poster?
 - (*Probe: What is the first thing that you notice?*)
 - How does this poster compare to other things that are displayed in your classroom?
- Do you think students would be able to use this poster independently? Why, or why not?
 - To what extent would this poster capture your student's attention?
- Would something like this help you teach about the food groups? Why, or why not?

- o Is there any information that gets lost or is unclear on this poster?
- Is this something you would consider using in your classroom? Why, or why not?
 - o How would you imagine using this poster?

Now let's think about both posters.

- Which of these is more effective at communicating information about the five food groups to children? Why?
- Which of these is more interactive? Why?
- Which of these is more engaging for children? Why?

You have been great and your feedback is very helpful. We have a brief survey to complete while you're signing out.

Thanks so much for talking with me today!